

1 IN THE CLAIMS

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3 1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a pH enhanced comminuted meat
4 composition, the method including the steps of:

- 5 (a) increasing the moisture content of a comminuted meat composition and
6 distributing the added moisture throughout the comminuted meat composition to
7 produce a moisture enhanced meat composition, the comminuted meat made up at
8 least partially of small comminuted meat pieces; and
9 (b) producing an ammonium hydroxide solution distributed throughout [in] the
10 comminuted meat composition.

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12 2. Canceled

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14 3. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [2] 1 wherein the steps of increasing the
15 moisture content in the comminuted meat and distributing the added moisture throughout
16 the comminuted meat composition and producing the ammonium hydroxide solution
17 distributed throughout [in] the comminuted meat composition [comprises the step of] are
18 performed by adding a solution of ammonium hydroxide to the comminuted meat
19 composition and thereafter applying mechanical action to the comminuted meat product.
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1 4. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of increasing the moisture content of
2 the comminuted meat composition includes adding water to the comminuted meat
3 composition.

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5 5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 4 wherein the step of producing the
6 ammonium hydroxide solution [in] distributed throughout the comminuted meat
7 composition includes contacting a surface of the moisture enhanced meat composition
8 with ammonia gas.

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10 6. The method of Claim 5 further including step of applying a mechanical action to the
11 moisture enhanced meat composition after producing the [ammonia] ammonium
12 hydroxide solution in the meat composition to distribute the added moisture and
13 ammonium hydroxide solution throughout the moisture enhanced meat composition.

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15 7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein the moisture enhanced meat
16 composition includes seasonings and wherein the step of producing the [ammonia]
17 ammonium hydroxide solution [in] distributed throughout the comminuted meat
18 composition increases the pH of the moisture enhanced meat composition to a pH above
19 approximately 7.0.

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21 8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein moisture enhanced meat
22 composition does not include seasonings and the step of producing the ammonium

hydroxide solution [in] distributed throughout the comminuted meat composition raises the pH of the moisture enhanced meat composition to the pH no greater than approximately 7.0.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [2] 1 further including the steps of:

- (a) placing the moisture enhanced meat composition into a desired shape after producing the ammonium hydroxide solution [in] distributed throughout the comminuted meat composition [and after applying mechanical energy to the meat composition]; and
- (b) setting the meat product in that desired shape.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 9 wherein the step of placing the moisture enhanced meat composition into a desired form includes containing the moisture enhanced meat composition in a flexible container and placing the flexible container in a mold to force the moisture enhanced meat composition into the desired shape.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 10 wherein the step of setting the moisture enhanced meat composition in the desired shape comprises heating the moisture enhanced meat composition to at least partially cook the composition.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a pH enhanced comminuted meat composition, the method including the steps of:

- 1 (a) adding water to a mass of comminuted meat [to produce a moisture enhanced
2 meat composition], the comminuted meat being made up at least partially of small
3 comminuted meat pieces;
- 4 (b) placing ammonia gas in contact with the [moisture enhanced] meat composition;
5 and
- 6 (c) applying mechanical action to the meat composition after placing ammonia gas in
7 contact with the meat composition and after adding water to the meat composition
8 to produce a moisture enhanced meat composition having the added water and an
9 ammonium hydroxide solution distributed throughout the moisture enhanced meat
10 composition.

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12 13. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a pH enhanced comminuted meat
13 composition, the method including the steps of:

- 14 (a) adding [ammonia] ammonium hydroxide solution to a mass of comminuted meat,
15 the comminuted meat being made up at least partially of small comminuted meat
16 pieces; and
- 17 (b) applying mechanical action to the comminuted meat after adding the ammonium
18 hydroxide solution to distribute the ammonium hydroxide solution throughout the
19 mass of comminuted meat.
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1 14. (Currently Amended) A meat product produced by:

- 2 (a) increasing the moisture content of a mass of comminuted meat composition to
3 produce a moisture enhanced meat composition, the comminuted meat being
4 made up at least partially of small comminuted meat pieces and the moisture
5 enhanced meat composition having the increased moisture content being
6 distributed throughout the composition;
- 7 (b) producing an ammonium hydroxide solution in the moisture enhanced
8 comminuted meat composition;
- 9 (c) applying mechanical action to the moisture enhanced meat composition after
10 producing the ammonium hydroxide solution therein [the comminuted meat
11 composition]; and then
- 12 (d) setting the moisture enhanced meat composition in a desired form by applying
13 heat, or pressure, or both heat and pressure to the moisture enhanced meat
14 composition.
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16 15. (Currently Amended) The [method] meat product of Claim 14 wherein the steps of
17 increasing the moisture content in the comminuted meat and producing the ammonium
18 hydroxide solution in the moisture enhanced comminuted meat composition comprises
19 the step of adding a solution of ammonium hydroxide to the comminuted meat
20 composition.
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- 1 16. (Original) The [method] meat product of Claim 14 wherein the step of increasing the
2 moisture content of the comminuted meat composition includes adding water to the
3 comminuted meat composition.
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- 5 17. (Currently Amended) The [method] meat product of Claim 16 wherein the step of
6 producing the ammonium hydroxide solution in the moisture enhanced comminuted meat
7 composition includes contacting a surface of the moisture enhanced meat composition
8 with ammonia gas.
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- 10 18. (Currently Amended) The [method] meat product of Claim 17 further including step of
11 applying mechanical action to the moisture enhanced meat composition after producing
12 the ammonia hydroxide solution therein [the comminuted meat composition].
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- 14 19. (Currently Amended) The [method] meat product of Claim 14 wherein the moisture
15 enhanced meat composition includes seasonings and wherein the step of producing the
16 ammonia hydroxide solution in the moisture enhanced comminuted meat composition
17 increases the pH of the moisture enhanced meat composition to a pH above
18 approximately 7.0.
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- 20 20. (Currently Amended) The [method] meat product of Claim 14 wherein moisture
21 enhanced meat composition does not include seasonings and the step of producing the
22 ammonium hydroxide solution in the moisture enhanced comminuted meat composition

1 raises the pH of the moisture enhanced meat composition to the pH no greater than
2 approximately 7.0.
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4 21. (Original) A method for producing a pH enhanced comminuted meat composition, the
5 method including the steps of:

6 (a) increasing the moisture content of a comminuted meat composition to produce a
7 moisture enhanced meat composition, the comminuted meat composition being
8 made up of small comminuted meat pieces;

9 (b) producing an ammonium hydroxide solution in the comminuted meat
10 composition;

11 (c) applying mechanical action to the moisture enhanced meat composition after
12 producing the ammonium hydroxide solution in the comminuted meat
13 composition; and

14 (d) combining the moisture enhanced meat composition with a meat composition
15 including large comminuted meat pieces.
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17 22. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a pH enhanced comminuted meat
18 composition, the method including the steps of:

19 (a) adding ammonia to a comminuted meat to produce an ammoniated meat
20 composition, the comminuted meat made up at least partially of small
21 comminuted meat pieces; [and]

22 (b) adding water to the ammoniated meat composition; and

1 (c) applying mechanical action to the comminuted meat composition after adding
2 ammonia thereto and after adding water thereto to distribute a resulting
3 ammonium hydroxide solution throughout the comminuted meat.
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5 23. Canceled
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8 24. (New) The method of Claim 21 wherein the steps of increasing the moisture content in
9 the comminuted meat composition and producing the ammonium hydroxide solution in
10 the comminuted meat composition are accomplished by adding a solution of ammonium
11 hydroxide to the comminuted meat composition.
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13 25. (New) The method of Claim 21 wherein the step of increasing the moisture content of the
14 comminuted meat composition includes adding water to the comminuted meat
15 composition, and wherein the step of producing the ammonium hydroxide solution in the
16 comminuted meat composition includes contacting a surface of the moisture enhanced
17 meat composition with ammonia gas.